



## Project Bug Light

Currently an effort is being made to save Bug Light in its present form (Official name: Duxbury Pier Lighthouse), now celebrating its 125th anniversary. The Coast Guard no longer has the funds to support this structure which, for navigation purposes, can be replaced with a much less expensive navigational aid.

A group in Duxbury, Kingston, and Plymouth, entitled "Project Bug Light," led by Dr. Don Muirhead, believes this historic maritime landmark should be preserved. This endeavor is not unique. Associations all over the world are working to preserve these inspiring nautical landmarks.

A reprint of the following article, which appeared in the Jan. 25, 1996 issue of *The Bar Harbor Times*, is an enlightening tale of one effort, among many, to save 33 lighthouses in Maine, indicating the universal desire to save these beautiful beacons of our maritime heritage.

### Let There be Lighthouses

By BETH ROWAN

When Island Institute Executive Vice President and Art Director Peter Ralston conceived of the Island Light Program in March 1994, he could never have envisioned the bright response from individuals and corporations across the United States.

In fact, it was a painfully slow process implementing the initial stages of the program, which aims to transfer ownership of 33 Maine lighthouses to the Institute, which would then pass them on to towns and nonprofit organizations willing to accept responsibility for their historic preservation and upkeep.

Area lighthouses involved in the program include Mount Desert Rock, which would be transferred to College of the Atlantic; and Great Duck Light, which would go to the Maine chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

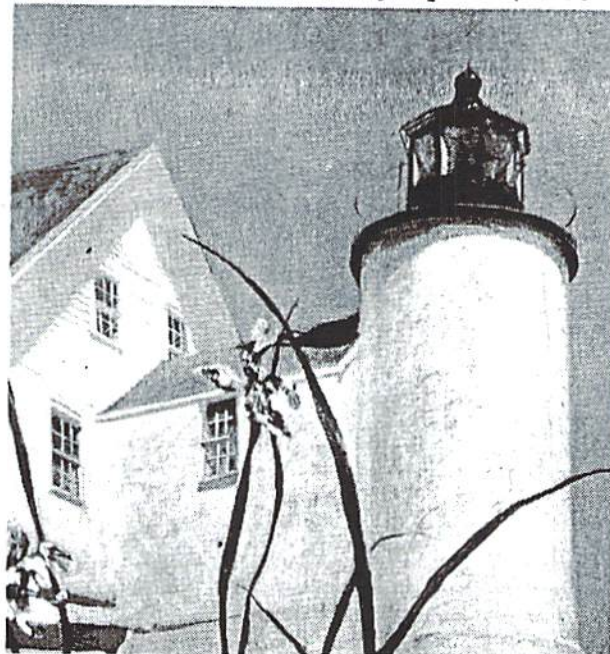
Now, with stage one through the Legislature and set for presidential signature, Ralston and staff can pursue the passage of stage 2 with gusto. Many acts of support have served to boost the lights program and now Southern Island artist Jamie Wyeth has become involved.

Wyeth, a nationally recognized painter who follows in the footsteps of his father, Andrew Wyeth, and grandfather, N. C. Wyeth, has used Southern Island's light as the subject of many of his works. Having lived at the light near Tenants Harbor for several years, Wyeth felt moved to dedicate an original painting to the Maine Lights Program and to supervise the production of the 300 fine art prints for fundraising purposes.

It was after a casual conversation turned into a several-hour brainstorming session that Wyeth and Ralston pounded out the idea of a Wyeth work benefiting the institute's Maine light effort. Friends since their childhood in Pennsylvania, Wyeth and Ralston were comfortable sharing dreams and visions; and the dream of maintaining Maine's lighthouses in a practical and efficient manner appealed to them both.

After Wyeth's offer and the initial decision to create the prints, which at Wyeth's request also would benefit the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the challenge of finding the perfect printmaking sources

Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, April 10, 1996



"Iris at Sea," by Jamie Wyeth, 1995

Wyeth created the dedicated work, "Iris at Sea," with the printmaking process in mind, desiring that the finished print maintain the quality of the original painting. In the past, his inability to locate such quality printmaking had prevented him from releasing his work in print form.

After extended research by Wyeth and Ralston (a well-known fine art photographer), a light was found at the end of the printmaking tunnel. Nash Editions, a California based outfit founded by rock musician-turned-art-enthusiast Graham Nash, used a new process (ironically slugged IRIS), which held much promise.

After securing the perfect paper, Somerset 100 percent cotton sheeting from a 400-year-old mill in England, the IRIS 3047 Graphics Printer was used to create the sample print. Wyeth and Ralston were pleased with the result.

Subsequently, 300 fine art prints were created, each UV coated in a special silk-screening process, ensuring the lasting integrity of the reproduction. Signed and numbered by Wyeth, the prints were readied for purchase at the price of \$2,500 each.

The benefit project was officially launched in October at Decatur House in Washington, D.C. For one week Wyeth's painting and the Island Institute's effort to take over and preserve some of our country's most treasured landmarks were given big play along the Beltway. Among those attending the show's opening reception were Vice President Al Gore and wife, Tipper; Governor Angus King and wife, Mary Herman; Maine senators Bill Cohen and Olympia Snowe; and former U.S. Senator George Mitchell.

"This has been a real windfall for us," said Ralston. "In this era of federal cutbacks and belt-tightening by nonprofit and state entities, all of us will have to be more imaginative, creative, entrepreneurial and cooperative in order to provide services that make a difference in people's lives—there are no 2 ways about it." He added that he hopes the "Iris at Sea" benefit will serve as a model for other such efforts.

